

## CONTROL DATE FOR THE LONGLINE SPINY DOGFISH FISHERY

The longline fishery for spiny dogfish is currently prosecuted by a limited number of vessels specializing in the fishery during the winter and early spring months when dogfish occur in fishable concentrations off the northern coast. The dogfish market is also relatively limited. A formal stock assessment for West Coast dogfish has not yet been conducted, but one is planned for the next assessment cycle (2007). Even in the absence of a formal assessment, life history information indicates that characteristics of the spiny dogfish (slow growing, late maturing, low fecundity) make it susceptible to overfishing. Dogfish populations have been depressed as a result of fishing in areas of Puget Sound and have been declared overfished on the East Coast.

Dogfish are currently included in the optimum yield for "Other Fish" in the management specifications for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. Given the life history characteristics of dogfish and their status in other areas, the Council may wish to consider adopting a separate acceptable biological catch and optimum yield for dogfish along with harvest control regulations (trip limits, etc.) as part of the 2007-2008 management cycle. Therefore, the Washington State government seat requests consideration of a mechanism to maintain the viability of the historical. Requiring a longline dogfish endorsement or permit based upon catch history is one mechanism that could be used to preserve the stability and economic viability of the current fishery should overall reduction of total catch become necessary.

Implementation of a dogfish endorsement or other mechanism to control dogfish catch for longline vessels would require an amendment to the fishery management plan. The results of stock assessments conducted and reviewed in 2007 could affect management measures considered as part of the 2009-2010 management cycle. Therefore, longline dogfish endorsements or other mechanisms to control dogfish catch, if approved, would be effective in 2009, at the earliest. A draft proposed process and timeline is outlined in Agenda Item B.8.b, Attachment 1.

While the potential effective date is a few years away, it will likely take over a year for National Marine Fisheries Service staff to draft the proposed and final rule and implement the resulting endorsement or permit application review, response, and appeal processes. As industry members are already aware that the Council may be considering limiting participation in the longline dogfish fishery in the future, it may be prudent to set a control date sooner, rather than later. Delaying adoption of a control date could lead to increased participation in the longline dogfish fishery by individuals anticipating the need to establish a catch history to qualify for an endorsement or permit in the future.

### **Council Action:**

**Consider Establishing a Control Date for the Longline Spiny Dogfish Fishery.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item B.8.b, Attachment 1: Potential Longline Endorsement for Spiny Dogfish, Preliminary Draft Process and Timeline.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Report and Recommendations of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Consider Establishing a Control Date

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